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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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AM: 000010-0500

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 PAGE 01 PESHAW 00319 01 OF 02 301125Z
 ACTION NEA-11

 INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-14 AOS-00 CIAE-00 OODE-00
 PM-07 M-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 OND-01 TRSE-00
 ACDA-12 SY-05 SYE-00 OCT-02 RP-10 SR-04 MA-06
 SPRS-02 SMS-01 /130 W

-----005346 301135Z /17

O 301008Z OCT 00

FM ANCONSUL PESHAWAR

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 1222

INFO ANCONSUL KARACHI IMMEDIATE

ANCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE

SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0764

USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY BEIJING

DETAILS

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 PESHAWAR 00319

E.O. 12065: NOS-4 10/27/00 (ARCHARD, D.B) OR-M

TAGS: SREF, PEPR, PINS, MOPS, AF, PK, UR

SUBJECT: HELICOPTER ATTACKS ON NORTH WAZIRISTAN

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY:

TOLD ME
 THAT OCTOBER 24 GUNSHIP HELICOPTER ATTACKS INVOLVED
 THREE PLACES IN REMOTE NORTH WAZIRISTAN AGENCY, INCLUDING
 THE ZAM CHINA REFUGEE CAMP. THERE WERE NO DEATHS AND
 THE THREE WOUNDED WERE ALL PAKISTANI TRIBESMEN. THERE
 WERE NO SOVIET LOSSES, AS NO PAK TROOPS WERE IN AREA
 WHICH IS CLOSED TO THEM. ATTACK COULD HAVE BEEN PROMPTED
 BY ANTI-SOVIET, ANTI-AFGHAN STANCE OF LOCAL TRADERS;
 INTENDED TO DEMONSTRATE REFUGEE AND PAK VULNERABILITY;
 RELATED TO FAIZ MOHAMMED KILLING; AND/OR BEEN A TEST OF

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PAGE 02 PESHAW 00319 01 OF 02 301125Z

PAK MILITARY REACTION TIME. PREVIOUS DAY, MIG WITH

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AFGHAN MARKINGS OVERFLEW PARACHINAR ON PROBABLE PHOTO-RECON MISSION. PAK AIR FORCE PROBABLY SCRAMBLED JETS BUT HAD NOT ENOUGH TIME FOR CONTACT. DOES NOT THINK INCIDENTS SERIOUS. REFUGEE HORROR PROBABLY HAS NOT BEEN AFFECTED, HE SAYS, AND INSURGENT FIGURES AGREE. OFFICIALS AND MEN ON PESHAWAR STREETS SEEN NOT OVERLY CONCERNED BUT PPP SUPPORTERS ARE QUICK TO PICK UP THIS ANTI-ZIA STICK. END SUMMARY.

3. I CALLED [] TO DISCUSS THE ATTACKS TWO DAYS EARLIER BY SIX GUNSHIP HELICOPTERS ON LOCATIONS IN NORTH HAZIRISTAN AGENCY. [] TOLD ME THE FOLLOWING:

4. THE HELICOPTERS FIRED MACHINE GUNS AND ROCKETS AT THREE SEPARATE PLACES IN THE AGENCY: TWO PAK TRIBAL VILLAGES, SHERKUK, ON THE TOCHI RIVER (RIGHT ON THE DURAND LINE) AND VILLAGE BAIKHEL AND THE ZACHINA REFUGEE CAMP NEAR GATTAKHEL, ABOUT 10 TO 12 MILES FROM THE BORDER. THE THREE CASUALTIES, WHICH I SAID WERE ALL PAKISTANI TRIBESMEN, CAME FROM THE FIRST LOCATION. ONLY ONE'S WOUNDS REQUIRED TREATMENT IN PESHAWAR, ANOTHER WAS TREATED IN THE AGENCY HOSPITAL AT MIRANSHAH AND A THIRD HAD ONLY MINOR INJURIES.

5. [] HAD NO INFORMATION ON THE TACTICS USED BY THE HELICOPTER PILOTS WHO ARE ASSUMED HERE TO HAVE BEEN SOVIETS FLYING MI-24S.

6. [] EXPLAINED THAT, DUE TO THE PECULIAR POLITICAL NATURE OF THE AREA INVOLVED, THERE WERE NO GOVERNMENT TROOPS FOR DEFENSE, THUS NO SOVIET LOSSES. THIS IS
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PAGE 03 PESHAW 00319 01 OF 02 301125Z

BECAUSE MUCH OF NORTH HAZIRISTAN AGENCY CONSISTS OF UNPROTECTED TRIBAL TERRITORY, INCLUDING THE AREAS ATTACKED. (BRIEFLY, THERE IS NO GOVERNMENT PRESENCE IN UNPROTECTED AREAS - NO TROOPS, NO OFFICIALS, NO ROADS - WHILE ALL ARE FOUND IN THE PROTECTED TRIBAL AREAS, ALONG WITH SCHOOL, ELECTRICITY, ETC.) IN 1947, MOST OF THE TRIBAL AGENCIES CONSISTED OF UNPROTECTED TERRITORY.

(JUST THIS MONTH, THEY OPENED A NEW ROAD IN SOUTH HAZIRISTAN AND PUT A

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BORDER POST AT BEANUD. TODAY, THE MOST IMPORTANT NON-PROTECTED AREAS ARE IN NORTH AND SOUTH WAZIRISTAN AND KHYBER AGENCY. IN THE LATTER AREA, THE TIRAH REGION REMAINS CLOSED TO THE GOVERNMENT, AND HENCE A SUBJECT OF CONCERN AS A POSSIBLE INVASION. STILL, THE GOP MUST RESIST TRIBAL SENSITIVITIES OR RISK BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PROBLEMS.

7. [] NOTED THAT PART OF AREA HIT IS NATAKHEL TRIBAL REGION (A KHEL IS A PATHAN SUB-TRIBE). RECENTLY, TWO NATAKHEL MALIKS (CHIEFS), NADIR KHAN AND NIAZ ALI KHAN, HAVE SHIFTED FROM TRADITIONALLY PRO-AFGHAN TO ANTI-RUSSIAN/PRO-PAKISTANI POSTURES. IN DOING SO, NIAZ WENT AFTER A RIVAL WHO LEANS TOWARD KABUL. CAPTURING HIS HOUSE AND TEN RIFLES. [] OPINED THAT HIS ACTIONS COULD HAVE PROMPTED THE GUNSHIP ATTACKS. ALSO, AFGHAN FRONTIERS MINISTER FAIZ MOHAMMAD HAD BEEN NEGOTIATING WITH TRIBESMEN FROM THIS GENERAL AREA BEFORE HIS RECENT DEATH. POSSIBLY [] THERE WAS SOME LINK BETWEEN THE TWO EVENTS.

8. MORE PROBABLY, [] THE SOVIETS WANTED TO WARN BOTH THE REFUGEES AND THE GOP THAT THEY ARE VULNERABLE. HENCE, SO FEW CASUALTIES, EVEN THOUGH

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PAGE 01 PESHAN 00319 02 OF 02 301106Z
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SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0745

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PESHAWAR 00319

ZANCHINA CAMP IS LARGE AND CROWDED. (HE COMPARED IT TO
THE LARGE JAMRUD CAMP NEAR HERE WHICH MANY VISITING
AMERICANS HAVE SEEN.)

9. THE DAY BEFORE ATTACK, AN ENEMY AIRCRAFT WAS
SIGHTED OVER PARACHINAR IN KURRUM AGENCY ON WHAT PAKS
THINK MAY HAVE BEEN A PHOTO RECONNAISSANCE MISSION
PREPARATORY TO THE ATTACK. / UNKNOWN MODEL
RIG WITH ITS AFGHAN MARKINGS CLEARLY VISIBLE FLEW LOW
AND STRAIGHT OVER AREA BUT DID NOT "BUZZ" IT. THEY
PROBABLY WANTED TO CONFIRM A RUMOR THAT ADDITIONAL
TROOPS HAD BEEN MOVED INTO KURRUM AFTER THE TWO SOVIET
AIR ATTACKS IN BAJAUR IN LATE SEPTEMBER. CONFIRMED
THAT PAK ARMY HAS MOVED A MIXED BATTALION THERE, ARMED
WITH ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS BUT NO CROTALE MISSILES.
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PAGE 02 PESHAN 00319 02 OF 02 301106Z

10. PAK AIR FORCE "MUST HAVE" SCRAMBLED INTERCEPTORS

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TO OPPOSE INTRUDERS. BUT AS AREA IS "20 MINUTES" FROM BOTH PESHAWAR AND SARGODHA AIR BASES, THERE WAS NOT ENOUGH TIME (HE DID NOT KNOW HOW LONG HELICOPTERS STAYED IN PAKISTAN) TO MEET THEM. AS FOR KOWAT AIR BASE "THEY DON'T HAVE IT" (PRESUMABLY MEANING NO SUITABLE AIRCRAFT ARE STATIONED THERE). POSSIBLY, ATTACKS WERE INTENDED AS A TEST OF PAK DEFENSES AND REACTION TIME.

11. I ASKED IF THE INCIDENTS OF THE 24TH WERE REGARDED AS SERIOUS. HE THOUGHT NOT, AS CASUALTIES HAD BEEN LIGHT AND NO MILITARY POSTS OR APPROACH ROADS ATTACKED. STILL, THE PAKISTANI PUBLIC MIGHT CONSIDER THEM SERIOUS BECAUSE THEY WERE MULTIPLE. HE DOUBTED, THOUGH, IF REFUGEE OR INSURGENT MORALE WOULD BE AFFECTED.

12. NOR DO PESHAWAR RESIDENTS SEEM OVERLY CONCERNED, ALTHOUGH AT LEAST SOME PPP SUPPORTERS ARE USING THE ISSUE TO ATTACK PRESIDENT ZIA. A RETIRED AIR FORCE OFFICER CALLS THE INCIDENTS "PIN-PRICKS." AN OFFICER IN MARTIAL LAW HEADQUARTERS THINKS THE SOVIETS ARE SIMPLY TESTING PAK REACTION TIME. ONE SHOPKEEPER PHILOSOPHICALLY SEES THE ATTACKS AS A ROUTINE PART OF LIFE. SEVERAL OTHER PERSONS VOICED NO OPINIONS.

13. MORE NEGATIVELY, A UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR SEES THE ATTACKS AS BAD OMENS. BUT THE MOST OUTSPOKENLY CONCERNED ARE PPP SUPPORTERS LIKE MY DRIVER, AN ALARMIST WHO WILL USE ANY INCIDENT TO BERATE MARTIAL LAW AUTHORITIES AND ZIA. LIKE ANOTHER SOURCE, HE THINKS THAT SOLDIER ZIA
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PAGE 03 PESHAW 00319 02 OF 02 301106Z

IS NOT EQUIPPED TO HANDLE WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY A POLITICAL PROBLEM.

14. EMBASSY NOTE: DEPARTMENT WILL NOTE DIFFERENCES IN DETAILS OF ATTACKS.

WE ARE
UNABLE TO RECONCILE THE REPORTS FURTHER EXCEPT TO NOTE THAT

VERSION.

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15. MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. ARCHARD

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